



DESNA, UKRAINE 1st Quarter 2016 Report

January

Dear friends!

We thank you for your prayers, and we are witnesses to the fact that God answers our prayers. During this month in Ukraine there are many holidays and days off. As much as we can, we strive to use these for evangelism, both corporate evangelism and personal. Our prayer and preparations focused on the children's Christmas holiday, which we organized in our church. Along with the children, we prepared a program where there were plays, poems, where we read passages of Bible history, and sang songs about our Savior. We saw how enthusiastically the children prepared for the Christmas holidays. And we saw what a nice and relaxed atmosphere this was for telling about our Savior.



Although it is not easy with all of children, we again and again faced the fact that children's faith differs from that of adults. We also observed how, through cartoons and television programs, even the youngest kids' minds become filled with trash, which tries to steer them away from Christ. In the course of rehearsal, one boy named Slavik began to refute the message, and even at a young age he believed and claimed, "We came from the Big Bang." And the most interesting was to see how other children began giving him evidence that God created us.



The children worked very hard in rehearsal, because they needed to participate twice and show that they are prepared. Once we invited their parents, and the second time they got involved with the program in church.

There is no better, more relaxed circumstance to tell people about God than with children's lips. We invited the parents to our holiday, where the children told about our Lord and about how He came to this world. All the parents sat smiling, for they saw their own offspring, who used songs and skits to tell about our Lord. After the conclusion, we had fellowship, where we could get acquainted with the parents and told them about our church, and also showed the parents what the children do in Sunday school.

For everyone, it was great joy to praise together our Lord. Pray for our church, that we will have growth and fruitfulness.

February

It really is possible to live differently.

Each person who lives in slavery to sin cannot imagine that it's possible to live a different life. After all, he has no power to change his life on his own. He has already made many attempts that never led to any success. But when an individual recognizes that he is in slavery and that his whole life is ruined, then that person begins to seek for a way of escape (salvation). That's when God sends us believers, so that we can witness to such people and invite them to accept the Savior.

That is how we happened to notice one fellow, who had already sunk deeply in bondage to sin. His apartment served many addicts as a place where they could pursue their dark deeds. He could not free himself of his addictions by himself. But one of the men from our church witnessed to him and said that our church could help him, that we could send him to rehabilitation center.

Zhenya immediately refused. He started searching for some sort of excuse for not going there. We joined in fervent prayer for him. And so, one night, Zhenya could not sleep. God took away his sleep. He lay there and thought about what awaited him in this life, and he understood, that he had no future. That night, he sent an sms by cell phone, that he was ready to go and do what we suggested. That is how we gained one victory, that Zhenya would enter the rehabilitation center. But our labor of prayer and emotional concerns did not end there. Zhenya tried to run away from the center. But by God's mercy and our prayers, God returned him to it. Clearly, for Zhenya to change his old way of life would

not be easy, and the forces of evil simply did not want to give him up. We prayed and prayed, but then a remarkable event happened in the life of Zhenya. God entered his heart and flipped everything there upside down. Zhenya became a different person and started spending much time in reading and praying. We couldn't help but rejoice at what God was doing in Zhenya's life.

But we didn't believe.....

Zhenya came home after being in the rehabilitation center two months. Everyone in our church received him warmly. But Zhenya said that God had placed on his heart the need to go to the school and tell the children about the harmfulness of narcotics and how they ruin life. We all thought, "Who is going to give Zhenya permission to go into the school to talk about narcotics?" After all, everyone knew him as a longtime addict. Yet, this idea wouldn't leave him. He came to me and said, "Pastor, what do you think? I will tell you bluntly; I have prayed, and God put the idea on my heart."

I decided to support him and began praying with him, that God would show him the way. He plucked up his courage and set off on foot for the school. There, no one had expected him. But they promised to think about it and to give him a reply in a few days. The school gave a favorable reply. They told Zhenya that two days later he could come and talk to the students. At church, Zhenya asked that we brothers and sisters gather so he could give a practice talk, and we all sat and joyfully supported Zhenya. The next day, Zhenya gave his presentation in the school, and everyone was amazed. For a long time afterward we heard from parents of various children who said, "What a great guy that Zhenya is." For us, this was a great encouragement.

I have used the example of Zhenya for those who did not believe Zhenya could ever change, that for God, there is nothing impossible.

March

Be steadfast and firm

I want to continue the story of brother Kolya, about whom I wrote to you several months ago. This is the brother who, by his example, showed how it's possible to believe and to serve in the army while also testifying of God. There has not been a worship service when he was absent. Let me share with you one story, which stopped me cold and showed Kolya how great God is.

Kolya was away at the war, and following that he returned and was made an instructor. He trains soldiers. But following training he seen off many men going to the war. He made it a custom for himself to gather together those being transported to tell them about God, and then he would offer to pray for them. Generally speaking, the soldiers were not opposed. After all, they weren't headed home, but rather to the war, and each one understood knew he could die, so fear was present. As he always did before a transport, Kolya gathered all those slated to go. He began to tell them about God and how their lives were in God's hands. He always offered to pray for them. However, one fellow by the name of Lenya didn't like this and in front of everyone he began to say how he didn't believe in God and got angry and stormed out, slamming the door as he did.

Kolya says, "I stood there in surprise. I didn't expect such a response. But I didn't get angry and prayed for them all, including for that fellow Lenya." Time passed, and Lenya was in a car that drove over a mine. By a miracle, he survived and is now in a military hospital. Kolya thanked God for sparing this fellow's life. After release from the hospital, Lenya approached brother Kolya and requested forgiveness for the way he had acted. "I know that I survived because of your prayer for me. I am alive, thanks to your God and your prayers."

After this, Lenya listened as Kolya told him about God, and he prayed with Kolya. Also, he began to read the Bible. Our God is great.

You know, for us this was a huge testimony. We ought not to drop our hands to our sides; we simply need to do God's work, and let God take care of His own business. People will not always joyfully receive what we say, but through various circumstances God shows that they need Him.

Respectfully yours,

Igor & Alexandra Fomichov